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FOREWORD

About fourteen years ago the people of Northern Wisconsin began to realize that they were losing their apparent security. Lumbering, the original industry in the North, was rapidly coming to an end. Unchecked forest fires added to the vast areas of denuded and cut-over land. Countless unemployed woods workers sought to use these lands for farms and in many instances invested their meager savings only to learn too late that the soils were generally unproductive.

Confronted with this widespread economic and social problem there appeared little for the people to do but to seek temporary relief and other governmental assistance. Prompt help through federal and state aid did keep most of the weaker civil units within the counties operating. Through the support of numerous educational agricultural and financial agencies great strides were made toward rehabilitation and reforestation. However, the people realized that before a return to a self-supporting economy could be brought about, something besides outside help would be necessary. The people of Oconto County, therefore resolved to do something themselves to put their own house in order.

Oconto County is typical of other counties in Northern Wisconsin and has taken some steps along the road to recovery through local action. In 1930 the County Board of Supervisors prevailed upon Congress to purchase thousands of acres of non-agricultural lands within its boundaries in order to relieve the tax-delinquency situation in its northern area. This resulted in the establishment of the Nicolet Forest which promises to give employment to hundreds of people and a valuable future forest crop in which the county will share.

Again, in 1934 a County Zoning Ordinance, involving thousands of acres of land and restricting further unprofitable agricultural development, was unanimously enacted by the County Board of Supervisors. In 1935 the county acquired through tax-deed an additional 64,000 acres of land much of which has since been placed under the Forest crop law. Many farmers and private owners are planting trees and practicing selective logging and better farm woodland management. In the fall of 1939 the County Agricultural Committee sponsored the Land Use Planning Program and has assisted many of its various committees in discussing their major problems and developing specific programs for agricultural improvement.

The farmers and citizens in Oconto County have taken a very active interest in this recent program and do understand their basic county problems much better than ever before. This work has proved to be a fascinating task and one that should be fruitful of results. The judgment of several hundred representative farmers, with respect to present and future land use and government adjustments, is presented in the following pages of this report.

H.E. Muehl, Chairman
Land Use Planning Committee.
Location of Oconto County, Wisconsin

Distances to Market Points
ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE

Organization

1. The County Agricultural Committee composed of H.E. Huehl, Chairman of the County Board of Supervisors; Suring; J.H. Bartz, Suring; H.L. Brock Lena; A. Wintner, County Superintendent of Schools; Oconto and R.O. Wedgwood of Little Suanico selected the county land use planning committee from nominations submitted by the County Agent and Assistant County Agent and other citizens. The County Agent was elected as secretary of the Land Use Planning Committee.

2. The County Committee was composed of the chairman of each township and all were farmers but one. In addition six farmers representing various local and state cooperative associations were selected. The membership also included all federal and state agricultural action agencies operating in the county, Welfare and Pension representative, six county officials (clerk, treasurer etc) a federal district forester, a state forester, Soil Conservation Service representative and several private lumber interests. Of the sixty (60) members declaring acceptance by mail fifty (50) definitely became active and remained so throughout the program.

The County Committee was divided into ten (10) subcommittees with responsibilities respectively on the following subject matters: Government, Taxation, Forestry, Land Use Classification, Soils and Roads, Recreation, Settler Relocation, Zoning Schools and Public Acquisition and Management of non-agricultural lands.

3. H.E. Huehl  Suring, Wis.  Chairman County Board of Sup'rs.
J.H. Bartz  Suring, Wis. R-1  County Agricultural Committee.
H.L. Brock Lena, Wis. R-1  County Agricultural Committee.
A. Wintner  Oconto, Wis.  County Agricultural Committee.
R.O. Wedgwood  Little Suanico, Wis.  County Agricultural Committee.

Chas. Foley  Oconto, Wis.  County Highway Commissioner.
Elwood Klauser  Stiles, Wis.  County Auditor & Tax Specialist.
Mary Norton  Oconto, Wis.  County Nurse.
Allan Ehlers  Oconto, Wis.  County Treasurer.
Kenneth Parker  Oconto, Wis.  County Relief.
Josie N. Cook  Oconto, Wis.  County Clerk.
Ed. Hall  Oconto, Wis.  County Land Agent.
Frank Kent  Oconto, Wis.  County Forester.

Harold Krueger  Oconto, Wis.  District Attorney.
C.O. Richardson  Oconto Falls, Wis.  Oconto County Cooperative.
Carl Maholm  Suring, Wis. R-2  Oconto Co. Breeders Cooperative.
Art Krause  Sobieski, Wis. R-2  Progressive Farmers.
Oscar Gilbertson  Cecil, Wis. R-1  Badger Cooperative-R.E.A.
C.W. Richards  Rinemander, Wis.  Soil Conservation Service.
Harry Bitters  Lena, Wis. R-2  Livestock Shipping Association.
Art Alsteen  Lena, Wis. R-3  Production Credit Assn.
James Thielke  Suring, Wis. R-2  Production Credit Assn.
J.P. Anderson  Oconto, Wis.  Farm Security Administration.
Ruth Thomas  Oconto, Wis.  Farm Security Administration.
Mrs. Belle McMahon  Suring, Wis.  Parent Teachers Federation.
James Hovind
F.M. Kihlmire

Forrest Peters
P.F. Johnson
Arthur McMahon
James Soukup
Otto C. Gohr
August Klingbeil
Harold Reed
W.H. Bortz
Frank Zimmerman
L.S. Whitcomb
Chris Nelson
Emil Birr
George Bell
Albert Anderson
Fred Krueger
Frank Blazek
Barney Fredrickson
J.J. Schalz
Chas. Nateke
George Bauers
Phil Wanner
Wm. Flynn

Wausaukee, Wis.
Lakewood, Wis.
Abrams, Wis. R-1
Mountain, Wis.
Suring, Wis. R-2
Coleman, Wis. R-1
Sobieski, Wis. R-1
Mountain, Wis.
Gillett, Wis.
Lena, Wis. R-2
Oconto, Wis. R-1
Little Suamico, Wis.
Gillett, Wis. R-1
Oconto Falls, Wis.
Oconto, Wis. R-2
Oconto Falls, Wis. R-1
Oconto Falls, Wis. R-2
Lena, Wis. R-5
Townsend Wis.
Underhill, Wis. R-1
Lakewood, Wis.
Mountain, Wis.
Breed, Wis.

Wisconsin Conservation Comm.
Federal District Forester

Abrams Town Chairman
Armstrong Town Chairman
Bagley Town Chairman
Brazeau Town Chairman
Chase Town Chairman
Doty Town Chairman
Gillett Town Chairman
Lena Town Chairman
Little River Town Chr.
Little Suamico Town Chr.
Maple Valley Town Chr.
Morgan Town Chairman
Oconto Town Chairman
Oconto Falls Town Chr.
Pensaukee Town Chairman
Spruce Town Chairman
Stiles Town Chairman
Townsend Town Chairman
Underhill Town Chairman
Wheeler Town Chairman
Riverview Town Chairman
Breed Town Chairman

4. Three Community Committees each consisting of three County Board Members were elected at special meetings covering the respective Northern, Central and Southeastern Town Groups. These committees were vested with the responsibility of encouraging interest and activity on the part of town committees.

5. Northern Community Group Committee - G. Bauers, Hal Hamlin, Peter Johnson
Central Community Group Committee - J. Bartz, H. Reed, Albert Anderson

6. Initial public meetings were held in town halls of each of the twenty three townships of the county for the purpose of introducing the program and to form township committees composed of five members. In addition to appointment of the town chairman, town assessor and one Agricultural Conservation Association member, by the County Agricultural Committee, two additional farmer members at large were elected by the group at these meetings. County Board members were appointed as chairman of these committees and secretaries were elected by the committee members themselves.

7. TOWNSHIP COMMITTEES

ABRAMS
Forrest Peters, Chairman
R.E. Wiedenhafft, Abrams, Soc'y.
H.E. Steinkraus, Abrams
T.G. Delano, Abrams
D.J. Baukhun, Abrams

ARMSTRONG
P.F. Johnson, Mountain, Chairman
Wm. G. Fosick, Mountain, Soc'y.
C.W. Bauerfiend, Mountain.
Deway Anderson, Mountain.
Ole Velton, Mountain.
BAGLEY
Arthur McMahon, Suring, Chairman
James Peterson, Suring, Sec'y.
P.J. Champeau, Suring
Louis Suring, Suring
Louis Stix, Suring

BRAZER
James Soukup, Coleman, Chairman
Gust Meetz, Coleman
Bert Couvillion, Pound
Wenzel Kust, Pound, Sec'y.
Wenzel Pivonka, Pound

BREED
Wm. Flynn, Breed Chairman
Floyd W. Tate, Suring, Sec'y
Harry J. Smith, Suring
Henry Klawitter, Suring
J.C. Hamberg, Suring

CHASE
Otto C. Oehr, Sobieski, Chairman
Henry Wysynski, Sobieski, Sec'y.
Stanley Komisarek, Sobieski
Leo Schwartz, Sobieski
Mike Perinovic, Sobieski

DOTY
Aug. Klingbeil, Mountain, Chairman
L.M. Hill, Mountain, Sec'y.
I.C. Clark, Mountain
Hal Hamlin, Mountain
Herman Leaftink, Mountain

GILLET:
Harold Reed, Gillett, Chairman
Harris Kasten, Gillett, Sec'y.
A.S. Bartelt, Underhill
Wm. H. Penfield, Gillett
Wm. Gandt, Gillett

HAY
J.H. Bartz, Suring, Chairman
Elmer Pethke, Suring, Sec'y.
Louis Deede, Suring
Otto Pethke, Suring
Arnold Krueger, Suring

LENA
W.H. Bartz, Lena, Chairman
Herman Imig, Lena, Sec'y.
A.E. Alesene, Lena
Wilford Masson, Lena
Chas. Koslowski, Coleman

LITTLE RIVER
Frank Zimmerman, Oconto, Chairman
Ed. Nerenhausen, Oconto, Sec'y.
Ed. F. Cisar, Oconto
Wm. Kehl, Oconto
Oliver Shallow, Oconto

LITTLE SUAMICO
L.S. Whitcomb, L. Suamico, Chairman
Mike Wanick, Sobieski, Sec'y.
Sylvester Nowicki, Sobieski
Stanley H. Golik, Sobieski
Frank Peters, Little Suamico

MAPLE VALLEY
Chris Nelson, Gillett, Chairman
James Thielke, Suring, Sec'y.
Herbert Buselman, Oconto Falls
Ed. Johnson, Suring
Zach Stewart, Suring

MORGAN
Emil Birr, Oconto Falls, Chairman
Henry Trapp, Oconto Falls, Sec'y.
Robert Harteau, Sobieski
Peter Larson, Oconto Falls
Wm. Schlorf, Oconto Falls

OCONTO FALLS
Albert Anderson, Oconto Falls, Chr.
G.T. Tuttle, Oconto Falls, Sec'y.
Paul Wudke, Oconto Falls
Andrew Loberger, Oconto Falls
Henry Larson, Oconto Falls

PENSAUKEE
Fred Krueger, Oconto, Chairman
Ed. E. Delano, Oconto, Sec'y.
Ernest C. Johnson, Abrams
Gaius Nichols, Oconto
Basil LeFevre, Oconto

RIVIERVIEW
Phil Wanner, Mountain, Chairman
John Marsh, Mountain, Sec'y.
J.J. Bloomer, Mountain
Carl Shabow, Mountain
Gust Elbe, Mountain

SPRUCE
Frank Blazek, Oconto Falls, Chr.
M.H. Kesler, Oconto Falls
Clifford Rice, Oconto Falls
Arthur Derow, Lena
Everett Piper, Oconto Falls, Sec'y.
STILES
Barney Fredrickson, Lena, Chairman
Cecil D. Black, Lena, Sec'y.
Chris Kenney, Lena
A.F. Schroeder, Lena
Emil Luisier, Lena

UNDERHILL
Chas. Natske, Underhill, Chairman
Harry C. Heiden, Underhill, Sec'y.
Ben Bergner, Underhill
Paul Wasmund, Underhill
H.C. Weber, Underhill

TOWNSEND
J.J. Schalz, Townsend, Chairman
C.A. Schreiber, Townsend, Sec'y.
Glen Cole, Townsend
L.C. Bowman, Townsend
D.J. Seeman, Townsend

WHEELER
George Bauers, Lakewood, Chairman
Wesley Jackson, Lakewood, Sec'y.
G.J. Challoner, Lakewood
John Challoner, Lakewood
F.H. Smythe, Lakewood.

INDIAN RESERVATION (Menominee) U.S. Dept. of Interior, Local Sup't. Keshena

PROCEDURE
I. Meetings
a. Since individuals of the county agricultural committee were made chairmen of the county subcommittees dealing with the most controversial subject matter, no special meetings of the County Committee was deemed necessary.

b. Meetings of the county committee consisted of one (1) for initial organization and also a final meeting for consideration of soil, classification and recreation maps and adoption of recommendations. Only two county committee meetings were held because thru membership on subcommittees all members were well informed.

c. Community Committees representing three groups of towns in the county met once to give an oral report as to town committee interest and activity.

d. Town committees in addition to the initial organization meeting met once every three weeks in their respective community. The County Agent and assistant agent attended five out of seven meetings held in each town.

e. Each township committee was furnished with a detailed town soil map, a county platbook, blank township maps, a ten-year crop statistical sheet by county and town, a recreation map, seven special agricultural bulletins an "Outline for County Land Use Planning in Wisconsin", four weather bureau maps, and highway maps.

f. Seven special district public meetings were held throughout the county just prior to the final county committee executive session. The meetings were held for the purpose of acquainting farmers with the map and recommendations prepared by their land use planning committees and to get a general crystalized opinion on subject matter involved.
g. Attendance

All township committee meetings averaged 80 per cent of the membership.
Community committee meetings averaged 100 per cent of the membership.
Public and County subcommittee meetings estimated as fair to good.
County Committee meetings averaged 85 per cent.

II. Correlation of Material
   a. Present and recommended land use classification maps were prepared
      by each township committee. These were then examined by the county
      subcommittees, assembled and copied onto the authorized large-scale
      map and presented for adoption by the county committee.

   b. Recommendations involving all phases of land use planning subject
      matter were made by the separate township committees, subjected to
      the scrutiny (for correction, additions, etc.) of the county sub-
      committees and finally presented to the county committee for con-
      sideration and adoption.

III. Special Assistance
   a. Federal, State and College Specialists attended several township
      meetings, all district public gatherings and the final county
      committee executive session.

   b. Interest on the part of the County Agricultural Committee, sponsors
      of the program, was exceptional as was evidenced by both their keen
      interest, activity and good average attendance at the various meet-
      ings held in all parts of the county.

IV. Limitations
   a. It has been definitely impressed upon local authorities and local
      extension workers that more intelligent and efficient work could
      have been accomplished if committee township members would have been
      selected and appointed instead of elected.

   b. Farmer committeemen having been accustomed to getting compensation
      for attendance at A.A.A. meetings and securing commodity surplus
      relief with comparative ease, have become prone to figure only in
      dollars and cents. This attitude limits the possibility in ad-
      vancing a program which, though of inestimable value, must present
      argument for self-help in competition with other meetings where
      compensation for attendance is made.

   c. It has been the local policy to prevent politics in conducting
      the land use planning program but in such subjects as government,
      schools and roads sound recommendations often do not get the support
      they deserve. Reticence due to political diplomacy on important
      findings may never permit carrying into action recommendations
      adopted by the county committee. For this reason the program in
      this county has emphasized the major problems for local action,
      about which individuals and smaller groups of farmers may proceed.

   d. There are several external problems requiring community and public
      action and facilities for following these may be limited but are
      not impossible to attain if county contacts, with outside author-
      ies, are kept alive through some plan of follow-up.
LOCATION, BOUNDARY AND POPULATION

Oconto County comprises 713,474 acres of land, 70,000 of which is part of the Menominee Indian Reservation. It is located in the northeastern part of Wisconsin and borders Green Bay for a distance of about twenty five miles in the east. In the north and east it is also bounded by Marinette and Forest counties; in the west by Langlade and Shawano counties; and in the south by Shawano and Brown counties. The population is approximately 27,000, nearly half of which is composed of farm families.

SETTLEMENT

The first settlement was started in 1829 at Peshtigo through the influence of lumber interests. From here in all directions farming followed the ax. The present predominating nationalities in order of numbers includes Canadian French, Germans, Poles and Irish with some Scandinavians. The first and last mentioned nationalities are more or less concentrated in the cities and villages. During the past ten years the population has been fairly constant with slight increases in the cities.

INDUSTRY

The first sawmill was erected in the city of Oconto in 1835 and in Oconto Falls in 1846. The county was originally covered with a very productive growth of timber most of which consisted of white pine, mixed hardwood and hemlock. Selective logging was unknown and only the very best timber was used. Incendiary fires and carelessness which followed early logging operations resulted in large areas of denuded areas. The first charter granted for a railroad right-of-way in 1856 was not executed until 1870 when it reached the city of Oconto. In time the plow followed the ax as the frontier advanced toward the north. Sawmills are now vanishing and much of the land of lowest value for farming purposes has reverted to the county through tax-delinquency. During the past five or six years a considerable amount of this land has been purchased by the Federal Forest Service and together with what remains in the hands of the county is rapidly being developed for timber production.

TOPOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

The surface features are characteristic of a glaciated region and vary from level to rolling and hilly. Ridges in the form of terminal and recessional moraines frequently broken with more level ground moraine basins and numerous swamps and lakes dot the county. The terrain assumes a general direction from northeast to southwest. Regardless of soil productivity, land too rough to be developed agriculturally is comparatively small in area. With the exception of a few isolated small areas in the southern half of the county, most of this type of land is either located in the Federal Nicolet Forest area or in restricted use district under the County Zoning Ordinance.
CLIMATE

The length of the growing season in Oconto County varies in the direction of northwest to southeast and ranges from 110 to 150 days. Corn, potatoes and other crops affected by light frosts have a shorter growing season in the north generally, but small grains, grass and root crops have a growing season more nearly equal to that in the southern part of the state. The difference between the average temperature (57°F) for this area and the southern (59.5°F) is slight according to the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey. Generally the last killing frost is around May 10th and the first killing frost during the first week of October with slight variations from south to north.

The local distribution and total amount of rainfall varies from year to year and averages thirty inches. This area is fortunate in that half of the precipitation comes in May, June, July and August and nearly seventy per cent from April to September inclusive. The climate influence of Green Bay is confined to a belt of from five to ten miles in width extending a distance of about twenty-five miles from north to south. The growing season of the southeastern half is much like that of southwestern Wisconsin.

SOILS

Soils in Oconto County vary widely, from heavy loams in the northwest and western portion (Kennan silt loam and Superior loam) to sand soils such as Plainfield most of which are located in the extreme south and east central parts of the county.

The predominating soil is fine sandy loam varying in productivity depending upon the water-holding capacity, subsoil and cropping. The sandy soil area, consisting of Superior, Miami and Fox fine sandy loam extends as a belt two and one half townships wide from the extreme west becoming better in quality until it approaches Oconto where a large percentage is composed of Miami loam.

Coloma fine sand and loams are found in small patches interspersed in the south half of the county. The Vilas series from fine sand and loam to stony sand is confined to a central strip in the northern seven townships. It is also in this area that much Kennan soil of the rough and hilly phase is found.

About twenty per cent of the county area is composed of poorly-drained soils, most of it being peat and muck and found in patches scattered throughout the county. In the extreme southeastern part of the county is an area of Poygan fine sandy loam comprising about 2,000 acres. It is possible to drain this area for farming purposes but under present economic conditions not advisable.
## COUNTY SOIL GROUPS AND QUALITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Better Quality</th>
<th>Fair to Poor Quality</th>
<th>Poorly Drained Soils</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Soils</td>
<td>Fine Sandy Loams</td>
<td>Fine Sand &amp; Sandy Loams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennan Silt Loam</td>
<td>Kennan Fine Sandy Loam</td>
<td>Plainfield Fine Sand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior Loam</td>
<td>Fox Fine Sandy Loam</td>
<td>Plainfield Sandy Loam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior Clay Loam</td>
<td>Superior Sandy Loam</td>
<td>Superior Fine Sandy Loam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami Loam</td>
<td>Coloma Fine Sandy Loam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miami Sandy Loam</td>
<td>Coloma Sandy Sand</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Vilas Sandy Loam</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vilas Sand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 %</td>
<td>47.7 %</td>
<td>25.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 %</td>
<td>49 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Soils With Sandy Base

77 %

### SOIL TESTS

Fourteen hundred (1400) samples of soil collected through twenty three land use planning township meetings and twelve hundred (1200) gathered through other means, representing approximately three hundred seventy (370) farms were tested for available fertilizer constituents. Results of these tests demonstrate that about 75% of the soils in the county are seriously low in phosphorus, 40% medium low in lime; and 25% are moderately low in potash. Since little alfalfa and other legumes are included thus far in the average rotation and nitrogenous fertilizers seldom used, the nitrogen content is generally deficient. About 2% of the farmers follow the practice of green-manuring. Soil building and soil conservation definitely are two of the major problems in land use in Oconto County.
RECREATION

The people of the county, particularly those in zoned and forest areas are rapidly becoming conscious of the dual value of recreational development. The northern townships having lost nearly fifty per cent of their assessed valuation and containing soils more or less unproductive, now appreciate that recreation is a means by which the tax base may be greatly increased. The income of both farmers and village people can be increased, providing better facilities for a larger influx of tourists and resorters. The people now realize the value of local regulations in aiding the development of summer homes, club camps and recreational activities. Many dams have been recommended for the purpose of raising the water-levels of the numerous lakes and streams. Golf courses, to be owned by the county, are being considered and conservation and wildlife refuge areas are being established in addition to the programs of the Federal Government.

TYPE OF FARMING

General farming with dairying as the major income-producing occupation is universal in the county. There is considerable diversification of farm income with the chief cash crops being pickling cucumbers, potatoes, peas and beans. Truck crops are not grown extensively but the progress being made by one or two enthusiastic farmers has clearly demonstrated the possibility of further expansion. All stages of disintegration of muck can be found in the county sufficient in area to warrant greater effort toward profitable utilization of this type of soil for this purpose.

About fifty-two (52%) per cent of the land in the county is in farms. These farms average one hundred five (105) acres in size. Very little land remains which could be profitably broken for farm use. Fifty-two per cent of the land in farms consists of cropland and fortunately erosion in any form is relatively unimportant. Eighteen per cent of the cropland is used for small grains and corn; seventeen per cent for clover, alfalfa, timothy and mixed hay; and the remainder is in rotation pasture. Most of the farmers have additional swamp and woodland pasture and little, if any of this is improved.

Most of the land not in farms (by far the greatest percentage) in the northern area comprising five towns and totaling 184,320 acres is owned by the Federal Government and designated as the Nicolet National Forest. With the exception of probably ten per cent in the possession of private owners, the remainder of the land not now in farms is owned by the county. A conservative estimate places seventy-five per cent of all land not now in farms and owned both by the federal and county governments, as reverted land due to tax-delinquency. Only a very small part of this land (most of it in widely scattered sections) could be used for profitable agriculture today. The entire area mentioned here is rapidly being reforested and recreational development is interspersed where feasible.
AREAS NOW IN FARMS NOT SUITED FOR ARABLE FARMING

CLASS A -

This area consisting of eleven different locations widely distributed in as many townships covers about 30,000 acres, one half of which is in farms. The soils are generally poor and even in instances where they are better, it is either too wet, swampy or rough for farm use.

CLASS A - 1, & 3 to 11 incl.

The problems in these areas are taken in aggregate simply because they are very much alike in most respects. With the exception of two minor areas most of them are contiguous with lands already zoned and all are recommended for restricted non-agricultural use through zoning. There are a few good farms but these are more or less isolated and it will be difficult to even encourage relocation, first because in many cases the settlers are satisfied with their present low standard of living and secondly because they look to opportunity for partial employment in tree-planting and other activities. The wild pasture available will furnish (and offset the low crop acres) cheap feed for young stock, horses and sheep.

Tax-delinquency will, over an extended period eliminate and help to relocate some settlers in these areas. There is little possibility of the county purchasing lands and relocating settlers since its financial status will not permit an increased burden. Probably fifty per cent of the farmers living in these areas are receiving relief in some form. Many families have strained their borrowing power to the limit. Unless assistance for relocation is forthcoming through some federal relocation project, little can be accomplished in change from present use.

If these area are zoned and the county gradually obtains possession thru tax deed the areas will be planted to trees. People of the type living in these areas are generally not prone to accept better agricultural ideas and in the long run it may be best that all agencies concerned discourage farming.

CLASS A - 2

This area comprising 10,000 acres, nearly half of which is poorly drained, consists of Plainfield fine sand. It is subject to wind erosion and inherently very unproductive. The remainder is largely Coloma fine sand and is very little more productive than the Plainfield fine sand. With special attention to proper management farms may be operated but they will never provide a decent living, much less produce an income sufficient to meet average expenses. So long as these people are satisfied with their present low standard of living and no relocation project is in view there isn't much that can be done for them. This area has been recommended for zoning against agricultural use.
AREAS NOT NOW IN FARMS AND WHICH SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR FARMING

CLASS B

Including 70,000 acres of the Menominee Indian Reservation this area comprises 350,000 acres or practically one half of the total land area of the county. Three-fourths of this area is located in the northern part of the county making up the Nicolet National Forest and several county forests. Of this total area about 90% has been zoned since 1935 and the committee recommends another 70,000 acres composed of "A" - "B" and "C" classes of land.

The soils are generally poor in quality and much of the land is hilly, rough and traversed with swamps, studded with brush and a low grade of second-growth timber. Although there are some good loams prevalent in small areas the soil is predominantly sandy. The land varies all the way from stone to a high degree of stoniness with distinct outcroppings, particularly in the northern portion. This land originally grew a good crop of timber but has been reduced to cut-over and waste through logging operations and successive fires. Most of the area is drained by the Oconto River basin on which are located several dams for power generation. Present and future reforestation will be a distinct help to rebuild a type of watershed which will insure future generation of power.

Scattered throughout the area are a number of isolated farmers, some of whom have made attempts to farm and others who do outside work to make a living. Roads are ample for the area at present and little building is anticipated in the future. Schools at Townsend, Lakewood and Mountain are sufficiently large but poorly equipped and financed. A materially reduced assessed valuation of both town and school districts and a declining average daily attendance, makes imperative a high tax rate. The county committee has recommended prompt consolidation of schools and consolidation of towns or some form of governmental reorganization.

High taxes and impossibilities of land sales have caused a high rate of tax-delinquency during the past ten years. During the first five years of this period the county took tax-deed to thousands of acres in the northern area and then sold much of the land to the Federal Government. But today there is still, though in much lesser degree, land reverting to the county. During the past five years some of this land has been placed under the forest crop law providing some income to the towns in lieu of taxes. Over 80,000 acres of land have been set aside as county Forest and 30,000 acres are now under the forest crop law.

Settlers, particularly in the northern towns, are distant from markets and generally their products do not measure up to the quality desired. Conveyance equipment is poor at best requiring frequent repair and roads are not being developed. Settlers who formerly were woods workers do not understand the problems of good farm management. Lack of finance, poor soil and education often has hampered these people and they subsist only because of partial relief and occasional outside work. The committee feels that there are but two avenues for escape,- the first, a settler relocation project and the second, encouragement and guidance in seeking employment in other fields.
Supported through appropriations by the county board of supervisors and volunteer donors, recreational development has been advanced in the Machickanee Forest. Areas fit for recreation are chiefly located in class "B" land which is dotted in the north with many lakes and streams. To maintain the water levels no less than six dams have been recommended and approved by the county committee. Certain of these dams have been proposed in order to promote wildlife refuges. Sportsmen's clubs have been and are becoming more active in moulding the minds of people toward the value of recreation, wildlife maintenance and the preservation of natural resources.

To sum up the facts relative to this area, the Federal Forest Service controls about 200,000 acres; the County Land Committee owns over 80,000 acres; the Menominee Indian Reservation involves 70,000 acres; and these figures together with proposal of an additional 70,000 acres to be zoned leaves about 293,000 acres for agriculture in the county. Uses to which class "B" area should be put involves reforestation, recreational development, conservation of wildlife and adjustments needed include relocation of settlers, consolidation of schools and towns.

3 -1 MENOMINEE INDIAN RESERVATION

The reservation is largely uninhabited and the soils are poor, consisting of unproductive Vilas and Kennan sandy types. The entire area is covered with second-growth timber and brush with the exception of small commercial tracts of coniferous timber. The county authorities are not cognizant of any particular human problems here. If these did exist, they would of necessity be taken care of by the local Federal Supervising Agency at Keshena in Shawano County.

3 -2 MACHICKANEE COUNTY FOREST

Comprising nearly 17,000 acres and isolated in the south central part of the county, this area presents problems little different from those found in "B" class. In 1937 about 1,250,000 trees were planted and each year more are planted in this area. There are very few settlers here and all of these lived in the area before the county was zoned in 1935. The soils will support only timber growth.

3 - 3 - 10 - 15 SOUTH BRANCH AND PESTIGE BROOK COUNTY FORESTS

This is a continuation of the Nicolet Forest on the south and east, but it is owned by the county and comprises about 63,000 acres. One third of the area is very wet and most highland is unfit for farming, consisting of Vilas and Coloma fine sand, peat and muck. The areas contain a scattered stand of immature timber and much brush. This spring 1,000,000 trees were planted and each year additional planting will be done. There are very few settlers in these areas and these do not present a serious problem since most of them receive employment by the county in Forestry work.

3 - 4 - 6 BAYSHORE AND HEBBY LAKE COUNTY FORESTS

These lands have been zoned by the county in 1935 and consist of about 11,000 acres. The soils are poor consisting of Plainfield and Coloma fine sand interspersed with peat and muck. The forest growth is sparse and covered with poplar, willow, tamarack, cedar, scrub oak and much brush. There are no settlers and reforestation is the future plan.
3 - 5 LITTLE RIVER

This area consisting of about 1,600 acres is largely muck soil and contains a fair growth of fuelwood. Most of the land is owned by the neighboring farmers, some of which is used for pasture purposes. There are no settlers.

3 - 7 OCONTO-PENSAUKEE BAYSHORE

There are a few farms in this area and about fifty per cent of them are receiving relief. Those not on relief are engaged in fishing which supplements their part-time farming operations. The 5,000 acres consisting of plainfield fine sandy soil is very unproductive. Here again the problem is one of settler relocation.

3 - 8 LITTLE SUAMICO BAYSHORE

As the name suggests, this land consists of a strip about one mile wide and ten miles long on the shore of Green Bay. It is composed almost entirely of Poygan fine sandy loam and while productive it is too wet for cultivation.

3 - 9 NICOLET FEDERAL FOREST

Much has already been said relative to this area but its relation to recreation is important since it embraces most of the land to be put to this use. Most of this land originally reverted to the county through tax-delinquency and was then sold to the federal government for reforestation. At the time of transfer there was very little timber of merchantable value and the few spaces left for grazing are now being reforested. In addition to the 180,000 acres the government is continuing to purchase land to block their holdings for reforestation purposes.

There are still some settlers scattered throughout the area and contacts made within the past three years through the Soil Conservation Settler Relocation Project have not resulted favorably because of difference or disagreement on price of land. There is little voluntary migration and unless a concerted effort is made by all units of government, little can be expected in the way of relocation.

There are private recreational areas such as the Holt Lumber Company property, consisting of three sections of land and embracing Archibald Lake; four sections belonging to the Green Bay Rod and Gun Club including many lakes; and one section belonging to Wayne King bordering Waubee Lake on the north. None of these, altho excellent areas, have been developed to any appreciable degree for recreation. In addition there are a number of other smaller parcels bordering lakes and streams on which little development has taken place within the past five years. All that can be done to hasten development of these properties is to encourage sales to individuals.

The county owns several parks located at Waubee Lake and Chute Pond which have been more or less developed. It is the policy of the county land committee not to sell its holdings along lakes and streams but to develop them for the public. Several dams have been built; one at Reservoir Pond and one at Chute Pond.
There are approximately one hundred and fifty lakes in this area ranging in size from five acres to as much as two sections and all with few exceptions are drained by the Oconto River basin. Lakes are restocked with fish and the trout streams are the equal of any in Northern Wisconsin. This area has exceptional possibilities for recreational development. Most of the recreational lands are not under government ownership but local people are, however, often assisted by the Federal Forest Service through road maintenance and fire protection. The county land use planning committee has repeatedly urged the further development of recreational resources in this region.

3 - 11 - 12 CHASE TOWNSHIP

These areas comprising about 5,700 acres consist of poorly drained Plainfield fine sand, Superior sand, peat and muck and are worthless for agricultural use. Both areas have a cover of poor second-growth timber and brush and the lands on the borders are used for grazing when not too wet. The land is largely owned by neighboring farmers who use it mostly for fuelwood. This land together with area which is contiguous and aggregating about 15,000 acres has been recommended for zoning and may within the next few years become a county forest.

3 - 13 - 14 STILES SWAMP

This area consisting of approximately 5,000 acres and largely swamp is really a part of a north and south belt six miles wide and extending eighteen miles long including A, B and C land. It is intercepted by two agricultural strips each about a mile wide and running from east to west. Were it not for these two strips of better land, this area should have been a part of the Machicknakee County Forest. The committee felt that this would be accomplished only if production control should become far more necessary than at present. The entire area is swamp and sandy with minor exceptions. Settlers in area B - 13 are on relief. B - 14 is a 700 acre isolated area, owned by the neighboring farmers and used for fuelwood.

AREA NOW IN FARMS BUT QUESTIONABLE FOR ARABLE FARMING

C - 1 - 2 OCONTO FALLS, & UNDERHILL

These two areas comprise about 3,000 acres and both are drained by the Oconto river. The soils are composed of Coloma and Superior fine sand, neither being very productive. The land is somewhat hilly and swampy in places. The Underhill portion has been recommended for zoning. Settlers do not present a problem since proximity to city and village affords opportunity for extra income to supplement farming.

AREA NOT NOW IN FARMS BUT WHICH IS SUITING FOR ARABLE PART TIME OR FULL TIME FARMING

D - 1 LITTLE SUAMICO LAKE SHORE

Unfortunately this is the only area in the county which might, with proper drainage, be used for the reestablishment of settlers from forest lands. The soil composed of Poygan, Miami and Coloma fine sandy loam is productive. At present the land is owned by neighboring farmers who use it for fuelwood and grazing.
AREAS NOW IN FARMS AND WHICH SHOULD REMAIN IN FARMS

This area is about fifty per cent of all the land in the county and is well established in farms averaging one hundred five acres per farm. It contains the best soil including Miami, Fox, Superior and Kennan loams and fine sandy loams. There are many small patches of swamp scattered throughout the area and these are being used as part of farms for fuelwood and partial grazing. There is no human problem and income is as good as can be expected under present economic conditions. The chief problems are deficiency in soil organic matter and a serious lack of phosphate.

E - 1-2-3-4-6 & 12 HOW, ABBAMS, MAPLE VALLEY, CHASE, STILES, MORGAN

These areas separated one from the other and located at different places within the chief agricultural part of the county have much in common. The soils vary somewhat consisting of Miami, Superior and Coloma fine sandy loams, with considerable Plainfield fine sand of the poorly drained phase in area 12. The acreage in each varies from 1500 to 7000 acres and productivity of the soil, while varying one from the other, is from 10 to 25% lower than that of the general "E" class of soil. Farmers in these areas are satisfied with their lower standard of living, classed as fair, but the average income is only sufficient for this living with mortgage amortization, at the expense of the farm buildings, being more or less universal. Generally the problems consist of soil building thru green manure and frequent application of fertilizer and manure and in area 12 including tile drainage.

E - 5 NORTHEASTERN PENSACOEE

The soil of this area consists largely of Plainfield fine sand and is bordered on three sides by land recommended for forest. Farms are not producing incomes sufficient for even a fair living but with fishing supplementing their earnings the people manage to get along but not without some form of relief. Since there are no available funds for the purchase of these lands, there isn't much that can be done in changing the present use of the land.

E - 7 to 11 incl. NORTHERN OCONTO COUNTY AREA

These areas comprising in the aggregate about 15,000 acres have not been zoned; are situated along the State Highway 32 in more or less separated settlements; and are located within the general area of the Nicolet National Forest. The soils consist of Kennan, Vilas, and some Plainfield fine sandy loams, silt loam and sand with stony sand, peat and muck interspersed. The farms are scattered and the average income is considerably lower than that for the county. But occasional employment of these farmers by the Federal Forest Service adds to their income and this together with different forms of relief apparently keeps them satisfied with their lower standard of living. At present the population is practically constant and public services are not being improved. In fact, these people are not in position to maintain their schools and roads because the assessed valuation of the towns has dropped within the last fifteen years to about one half the original. The farms in the areas require better management and should be increased in size. Town consolidation has been recommended by the county committee.
The average number of dairy cows per farm is nine but the committee feels that a family-sized dairy farm should have twelve with five head of young heifers for replacements. Farmers should join the Oconto County Breeders Cooperative because the service is fully as cheap as maintaining a bull and herd improvement far more positive. To gain the most benefit in an artificial insemination ring, farmers should also belong to a Dairy Herd Improvement Association in order to check properly the results of the farmer and at the same time file valuable production and feeding records. At present the average production of butter fat per cow is less than 200 pounds per year and this is too low to realize a profit. It is also necessary that an area test for Bang’s Disease be conducted in the county. Occasional tests on scattered farms will not afford the protection necessary to stamp out the disease which is more or less prevalent in the county.

In view of the price situation for dairy products and the apparent increase in supply together with a lowered demand farmers should be encouraged to diversify their crops in order to maintain their present income or even increase it. More canning peas, beans, beets and cucumbers, strawberries, onions, sugar beets and further development of truck and vegetable crops would help materially to augment income. Markets are available not only in the county but in the immediate neighborhood. Metropolitan centers are nearby.

It may not be wise in this area to increase hog production, especially since prices for several years have been low and grain crops do not do well here but every farmer should at least have one sow to farrow in order to supply his family and possibly have a few pigs to sell. In spite of the dog menace, flocks of sheep ranging from fifty to one hundred or more should be considered by those farmers whose situation warrants it.

Soil conserving practices such as application of lime, phosphates and potash are very essential in this area. Phosphate fertilizer should be made available through the A.A.A. program. Since this element is the limiting factor (outside of lime) in growing legume hay it is advisable to make applications to new seedings in the fall. Plowing under a second crop of alfalfa or turning under sweet clover will assist very much to keep a balance of humus. Soybeans, Buckwheat and Vetch can also be used.

Farmers should not depend too much upon the type of swampland pasture obtainable here but should give better care to their tame pastures by occasional renovating with a spike-toothed harrow and light applications of fertilizer.

Woodlots have not been given much attention in past years but farmers recently have begun to practice selective cutting and giving the areas protection for natural seeding. It has been recommended by the committee that each farmer should have at least 10 to 15% of his farm acreage in woodlot. Woodlots should be fenced first, because the pasture afforded is usually insufficient for milk production and secondly, because woodlots will not reseed if livestock is permitted.
INTENSIVE FARMING AREA

This area occupies four fifths of all the land in class "E". It is the most intensively farmed area and contains the best soils in the county. The average income per farm is above those in any other part of the county. As a whole the chief agricultural problem appears to be better management of sandy soils with emphasis on legumes (alfalfa, clover and soybeans), the use of green manuring crops and application of fertilizer, chiefly phosphate.

There are one hundred fifty-one farms per town as against but forty three per town in the northern seven townships. Nearly ninety per cent of the land in this area is in farms whereas in the north the percentage is much lower. The percentage of cropland in this southern area varies from 39 to 64 with an average of 54 per cent per farm as against an average of but 30 per cent for the northern area. The county committee definitely believes that seventy five per cent of the farm acreage should be in cropland. On the acreage basis this would amount to about seventy six acres per farm. Twenty five per cent of the cultivated acreage should be in intertilled crops including corn, potatoes, cucumbers (pickling) sugar beets, beans, peas, soybeans and truck and vegetable crops. Twenty five per cent should be in small grains such as oats, barley, wheat, rye and emergency crops sown broadcast. It is cheaper and more profitable to buy grains for feed rather than grow them in this county since production per acre is low in this section of Wisconsin. With the introduction of hay silage (alfalfa and clover, etc.) it is likely that more hay could be grown and the small grain acreage reduced.

Fifty-five per cent of the cropland should be in grass and hay crops equally divided to maintain sufficient pasture. Wild pasture is not the best at its best. Alfalfa acreage should definitely be increased. Unless fields of alfalfa show luxuriant growth during the third year of cropping, the first cutting should be done a little later than ordinarily and the second, after as much growth as possible, should be used as green manure. Organic matter and the resulting accumulation of humus is quite deficient in the sandy soils of Oconto County.

Relative to potatoes, it appears that this crop has dwindled in acreage during the past five years. The average farm raises about one acre and there are very few who specialize in this crop. Quality potatoes can be raised in this county. The chief potato growing section in the county is more or less confined to the towns of Oconto, Brazeau, Little River and Lena, all located together in the northeast. There is no particular reason why this crop could not be made one of the most important cash crops other than possibly occasional unfavorable weather, low prices or indifferent attitude of the farmer. Quality is essential and grading must be done. Better seed, adapted varieties, proper fertilization of the soil and good care together with treatment for scab and scurf and selling only U.S. No. 1 grade and certification, will do much to accomplish the desired results.
## Generalized Land Classification

Oconto County, Wis.

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Above figures do not include cities and villages.
Menominee Indian Reservation not included.
RECOMMENDATIONS

GOVERNMENT

It is necessary to adjust the cost of public services to the present needs in areas where the land use and population pattern have been and are being changed. In general it is evident that some townships are not and will not for some time be self-supporting. In addition to the use of 100 per cent of all state and federal aids, these townships require increased finance to operate efficiently.

1. It is therefore recommended that the townships of Doty, Breed, Bagley, Wheeler, Townsend, Armstrong and Riverview, all within the Nicolet National Forest, County Forests and County Zoned Areas, should consider consolidation or reorganization. The township of Stiles located among well established self-supporting units might also consider consolidation.

The seven northern townships might be consolidated into two or three civil units and thereby make a saving to themselves and the county. Under governmental reorganization, the area of towns and type of government might be changed according to major land uses and only the vital public services provided. Each town could be provided with a substantial agricultural, industrial or urban taxbase and the forest land added to the several or all townships involved.

2. It is recommended that the Department of Agricultural Economics of the Wisconsin College of Agriculture, be asked to make a detailed study of consolidation for the townships above mentioned.

3. The committee recommends that the state legislature require that all candidates for town assessor and clerk pass a special qualification test.

Uniformity of assessment on all property throughout the county is essential. In the past town records and reports have not been accurate in many instances.

TAXATION

The property taxbase during the past ten years has declined approximately 50 per cent which has resulted in an increasingly strained local financial situation. The income-producing capacity of property determines its ability to contribute to the support of government. Farmers on cut-over sandy land with insufficient cropland acreage have a very low income and are unable to pay property taxes. The ratio of assessed to true value has materially increased thus making the tax rate on true value increase to a point where even the best farmer has difficulty to meet his taxes.

4. If general taxation can not be equitably based on net income instead of the present personal and real property then it is recommended that a revision of the present method be made with the provision that definite exemptions, up to a certain limit on assessed valuation, be granted to farmers and old people. This recommendation should be transmitted to the assemblyman and senator of this district.
PUBLIC ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT OF LANDS

Leniency before taking tax deed on unused cut-over tax delinquent lands and extended time granted for redemption results in a loss of revenue to the county and a lowered taxbase during the interim.

5. It is recommended that the County Board of Supervisors take deed to all tax delinquent lands at the earliest possible opportunity consistent with the Wisconsin Statutes. These lands should be placed at the disposal of the County Land Committee immediately so that their ultimate disposition as forest crop land, recreational development and woodlot or timber sales could be speedily effected.

To gain immediate revenue or profit there is a natural tendency to sell county owned tax-reverted agricultural lands without regard for the ultimate effect on town or county finances.

6. The County Board of Supervisors should exchange agricultural lands obtained through tax deed for isolated farms in county forests or those in present and proposed zoned areas.

ROADS

Many townships have antiquated or wornout highway equipment and are unable to repair or purchase new and needed machinery. Stub and intertown roads are often inadequately serviced. Necessity for retracing to get to other locations causes a waste of time and money. There is limited demand for county equipment on state roads. The public demands more efficient and prompt service.

7. The County Highway Department should be made a central agency for snow-removal and road maintenance of all town roads. The County Board of Supervisors in considering this recommendation should ask the Highway Department to furnish all facts and to develop a comprehensive plan for this operation based on its experience with the present volunteer town system.

Present serviceable town road equipment could be rented or purchased and conveniently placed throughout the county. Similarly, employees could be placed in these respective locations. Efficiency in service and the saving of money and time could be demonstrated within one years' trial through the volunteer towns that are now operating under the control of the Highway Department of the county.

8. The Town and County Boards of Supervisors should develop roads in areas where definite recreational facilities will improve the economic status of civil units.

A road connecting several lakes or streams is valuable even if there are no farms located on its course because convenience to resorters and tourists is essential to continued benefits for both town and county.
Approximately thirty-eight school districts have an assessed valuation less than $100,000. Ten have an average daily attendance insufficient to meet state requirements for aid and about as many more are borderline cases. The cost per pupil in all elementary schools in the county is above the average for the state. Rural schools are in slightly better position due to the fact that they sacrifice equipment and lose the benefits of efficient service. With a low tax base per teacher, a high tax rate per dollar of assessed valuation and a low average daily attendance, school cost per pupil is almost prohibitive.

It is therefore recommended:

9. That the County Superintendent of Schools present the complete situation to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and recommend that prompt action be taken to consolidate or close schools consistent with good educational procedure.

10. Because present school transportation is more or less inefficient and costs somewhat excessive, it is recommended that a central supervising school transportation agency be established within the county to provide closer control over all routes for all schools. Operation should be made effective under the supervision of the State Highway and Public Instruction Departments.

11. That State Aid be provided for High School Transportation to obviate overlapping; reduce unjustified costs and prevent route conflict between High School, Elementary and Rural Schools.

12. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction should be asked to conduct a study of the school transportation system in Oconto County at his earliest convenience with the view to learn if savings and efficiency would result through a centralized transportation system.

ZONING

Three-fourths of the townships in the county have parcels of land recently classified as non-agricultural and designated by the land use planning committees as "A" and "B" areas. Settlers entering these areas eventually become public charges.

13. The County Board of Supervisors should make plans to amend the County Zoning Ordinance to include these areas with the approval of the respective town boards.

14. The County Board of Supervisors should promptly investigate present and proposed zoning areas, revise non-conforming use lists and present a summary showing compliance with the ordinance. It should further indicate any reversions of land to unrestricted areas and encourage individuals to report violations of the Ordinance.
RELOCATION OF SETTLERS

About fifty isolated settlers in present and proposed zoned areas are causing prohibitive governmental cost for public services.

15. It is therefore recommended that isolated settlers should be re-located on agricultural land in settlements already established where they have a good chance for success.

16. The County Board of Supervisors should actively solicit continued land purchases by the Isolated settler Purchase Project of the Soil Conservation. Likewise any available county owned agricultural land should be exchanged for farms of isolated settlers.

17. That Congress should provide that the United States Forest Service with more funds to enable more rapid and equitable purchase of isolated farms and forest lands in the federal forest.

This procedure would increase employment now, when needed and go far in assisting in bringing about governmental reorganization and town consolidation, particularly in the northern part of the county.

FORESTRY

A large part of the purchases of the Federal Forest Service consisted of three to five years tax-delinquent land which was unsuitable for agriculture. The purchases have not greatly reduced tax revenue in the county. Increased employment, increased income from recreational industry, fire-protection work on private lands and reduction in local costs of government where schools and roads are eliminated are important by-products of an active forest program. In addition to the 10% spent for construction and maintenance of roads and trails, the 25% allocation to the county of the gross receipts from sale of timber would be most effective if available now when the need is urgent. When sanction of the people was solicited for the purpose of establishment of Nicolet National Forest it was expected that a great deal of employment would be provided. Since relief and unemployment are still rampant, more employment is still needed.

18. It is recommended that the Federal Government thru the Forestry Service provide an advance annual acreage payment to the civil units involved. Payment should be operative until such time as the 25% gross forest income equals the amount paid in lieu of taxes.

19. It is recommended that the County Board of Supervisors urge the Federal Government through the Commissioner of National Forest Relations for Oconto County to make a grant to the Federal Forest Service and the State Forest and Conservation Agencies, as administrating agencies, for the purpose of a forest development program to aid the people to become economically independent. The sum of money to be paid over as a grant shall be taken out of WPA funds based upon what would have been to WPA the labor cost as established for that district of man hours required plus the percentage contribution per man month for material as permitted under WPA regulations. The administering agency shall proceed to do the project work under its own established procedure, and without restriction in employment as to employee status on relief or qualifications other than ability to do the work assigned to him.
20. It is also recommended that from 10 to 40 acres of land depending upon the size of the farm and per cent of non-agricultural land in the farm be set aside permanently for woodlot. These woodlands should be restricted from grazing and be protected from fire. It is urged that the county agent cooperate with the United States Forest Service and the Wisconsin Conservation Department in conducting several woodlot improvement demonstrations in Oconto county.

21. It is recommended that both the Federal and County Forests in the county be managed to provide the greatest good to the greatest number. Every acre should be put to its best use whether it be timber production, recreation, game cover, grazing or a combination of all. The aim should be to secure a sustained yield and when mature timber should be sold in the form of "timber sales" to reliable parties under supervision to prevent undesirable cutting practices.

RECREATION

Recreational facilities should be consistently improved since it not only rebuilds men but it also adds from 5 to 10 per cent to the tax base which has been subject to rapid decline in the areas best adapted for recreational development.

22. It is recommended that a good shore road be built along the border of Green Bay near the County Bay Shore Forest so that this large amount of shoreage will be open for recreational purposes.

23. In the Peshtigo Brook Area we have about 6,000 acres of idle land covered with grass and willow brush. Due to this area being dry during the late summer, water fowl have not used it extensively. A dam should be constructed in Section 21- Range 15, Township 30 through which water level could be raised and maintained south of State Highway 64.

24. Resorters in the Mountain and Lakewood area must travel beyond the confines of Oconto County to find a Golf Course. The county now owns an admirably suited tract of land one and one-half miles east of Lakewood which should be developed without delay.

25. Beach development for bathing is essential at Waubee Lake. It has a fine group of cottages and two resorts. Since private interests have made large investments here it is recommended that the town and county governments both should assist in improving public services.

26. There is a definite need along our main traveled highways for roadside tables and rest areas. Such spots when well chosen and used ease the strain on occupants of automobiles, thus preventing accidents and at the same time prove an excellent advertising medium for both county and state.

27. A dam should be built at the outlet of White Potato Lake to maintain water levels. A dam should also be built on the upper Peshtigo Brook to divert water to this lake to raise and maintain water levels and improve fishing. The lakeshore would be more desirable for summer cottages.
28. A dam should be constructed on the outlet of Crooked Lake to raise and maintain water levels. This lake has a well-developed summer colony and should be given every reasonable public service to keep people contented.

29. The Machickanee County Forest winter sports area should be further developed. It has advertised Oconto County very much during its first year of operation.

30. Both summer and winter sports should be encouraged more extensively in the northern or Nicolet National Forest Area. The Wheeler Dam will be doing its part in maintaining water levels.

FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Reasons why a certain group of farmers fall in the low-income class:—Poor soil, lack of credit, inadequate crop acreage, poor health, poor farm management, poor income management, over-sized families, excessive liens and excessive taxes.

It is therefore recommended:

31. That endorsement and encouragement be given to the present Farm Security Administration Program on all land classed as "D" and "E" by the county land use planning committee.

32. That no loans be given to those farmers living in zoned areas unless they declare their intention to relocate and will require aid only until such time as a satisfactory and reasonable relocation proposition becomes available and acceptable.

33. That first consideration be given to those farmers who have or are about to lose their farms through mortgage foreclosure. It is more practical to continue these farmers than to start a new man on the same property.

34. That the procedure to move isolated settlers by loaning them up to seventy-five per cent of the option price.

WISCONSIN CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

35. Townships at the present time are not receiving the stipulated 10 cents per acre of forest crop land because appropriations have been cut and acreage purchase has been increased. It is more important to keep the price up than to increase the acreage if the plan is to receive the support of land owners. The department and the Wisconsin legislature are urged to continue the original payment of 10 cents per acre under the forest crop law.

36. Local farmers and citizens should cooperate more fully with the Conservation Department employees in the enforcement of game, fish and forest fire laws of the state. Violators should be reported promptly and individuals should realize it their duty as citizens of this state to report promptly all cases of vandalism.
RELIEF AND W.P.A.

37. It is recommended that a special township committee be authorized to certify to the WPA and Relief offices those people within their respective townships who may be eligible for aid.

38. Money appropriated for WPA should be distributed to the townships based on their needs and permit the town to hire its own labor and care for its own relief cases.

39. WPA workers living on land should be encouraged to become self-supporting instead of depending upon WPA as a year-around job. All families wholly or partially employed and living in the county should be definitely required to grow a garden sufficiently large to provide all vegetables for home use.

40. More rigid restrictions should be placed upon those receiving relief, surplus commodities or WPA work in order to encourage them to seek a status for self-support.

FEDERAL LAND BANK LOANS

The average gross income for all farms in Oconto County with Federal Land Bank loans is about $500 which is only enough to provide a living for the family. Any payments that are made are done so at the expense of the farm and living standards of farm families. As loans increase in size they often reach a point where loans exceed the present value of the farm.

41. It is therefore recommended that farms owned by the Federal Land Bank within the Nicolet National Forest, within County Forest and Zoned areas should not be sold for farms if classified as non-agricultural. The Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the United States should work out a financial plan whereby these farms could be sold to the Federal Forest Service and to the county for the purpose of reforestation.

42. Congress should continue the present policy of 3 1/2 per cent interest rates on all Federal Land Bank loans for farm mortgages. Commissioner loans at the rate of 4 per cent should be continued and possibly made permanent.

43. Old Federal Land Bank loans (written at interest rates above 4 per cent) should be re-written at interest rate of 4 per cent comparable to new loans as issued to-day.

44. It is also recommended that interest rates on Federal Land Bank farms acquired by them and resold to the public should be reduced from 5 to 4 per cent.

AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT ADMINISTRATION

Very little new land remains in the county which can successfully be used for farming. Fifty per cent of the farms have too little cropland and many farmers are forced to buy large amounts of concentrates. About sixty per cent of the land in farms contains soils with a sand base. Seventy five per cent of the soils are seriously low in plant foods.
It is therefore recommended:

45. That soil-building payments be increased 25 per cent and soil depleting payments be reduced by a correspondingly proportionate percentage.

46. That application of fertilizer on depleting soils, where used as a nurse crop for new seeding, should be permitted and a fifty per cent soil-building payment be made thereon.

47. That a full-performing participant in the program be permitted to take up to eighty per cent of the entire anticipated payment for the purpose of applying fertilizer in soil-building practice.

48. That the dairy farmer be given parity payments so as to receive at least the cost of production for dairy products. Consideration should be given the dairy farmer just as other special-crop farmers are receiving on wheat, etc.

GENERAL AGRICULTURAL RECOMMENDATIONS

49. Under average farm conditions, particularly in consideration of the large percentage of sandy soils, it is necessary to have a minimum of 45 acres of cropland per farm.

50. Cheese production is the major industry in the county. Improved methods of distribution and sales can best be served through production of quality milk. Any program for quality milk must be extended over a period of years if it is to become effective.

51. Farmers should endorse the program of the Oconto County Breeders Cooperative to reduce cost and increase participation. Organization of more units would have the desired effect.

52. It is recommended that the College of Agriculture work out a simple and inexpensive method (centralized sampling and testing stations) so that Dairy Herd Improvement Association services would be available to the bulk of farmers in the county.

53. There is need for a good well-developed primary marketing center in the county. If natural cheese is the solution for a better and bigger market, then cheesemakers and farmers should interest themselves in a county central process, storage and marketing warehouse.

54. With most of the soils of the county more or less sandy it is recommended that the growing of legumes for green manure crops should be encouraged. This practice would increase the water-holding capacity and retention of readily available fertilizer applications of these soils.

55. Farmers and all agencies concerned with the problems of the farm are urged to follow the land use classification maps and foregoing recommendations in the guidance of their programs.

56. The county agricultural committee through the county agent representing the College of Agriculture should be contacted frequently in order that programs of various agencies aiming to assist farmers fit together for the common good of agriculture.
Summary Sheet - County Planning Project, 1939-40, for Crop Farming Areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEMS</th>
<th>COUNTY AVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Present Cultivated crop-land to be continued in cultivation</td>
<td>97 : 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate number of acres of land in the area to be continued in cultivation</td>
<td>181849 : 178212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Recommended cultivated acreage to be in:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Intertilled crops</td>
<td>15 : 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Small grains and other close grown crops</td>
<td>22 : 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Grass and hay crops</td>
<td>63 : 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Recommended Cultivated Cropland acreage Needing Soil Conservation Practices:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Strip Cropping</td>
<td>None : None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Lime-phosphate application or other fertilizer</td>
<td>5 : 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Terracing</td>
<td>None : None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Winter cover crop for green manure</td>
<td>2 : 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Summer cover crop for green manure</td>
<td>2 : 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Contour Cultivation</td>
<td>None : None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Farm Woodlot (Improved)</td>
<td>5 : 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate acreage Recommended for Pasture (All Types)</td>
<td>150,000 : 100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plowable acres of Pasture per cow</td>
<td>1 : 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Recommended acreage for Pasture Needing Soil Conservation Practices:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Lime Phosphate Application</td>
<td>5 : 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reseeding</td>
<td>1 : 50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MAJOR PROBLEMS OF THE COUNTY
(Recognized by the Town and County Planning Committees)

I. SOIL FERTILITY

Fifty-one per cent of the land in farms in the county, consisting of Superior, Fox, Miami, and Kennan loams, is classified as better quality; 49% consisting of Superior, Plainfield, Coloma, Poygan sandy loams and sand together with Peat and Muck is classed as fair to poor quality soil. About 75% of these soils contain a decided sandy base. Production of small grains per acre is below the state average and below the average for the district. In all corn production it is but two-thirds of the state average and in potato production it just meets the state average. About 75% of these soils are seriously low in phosphate, medium low in lime and moderately deficient in potash. The majority of the land in farms is low or out of balance in organic matter.

II. HERD IMPROVEMENT

There is no one particular breed of dairy cattle predominant. With the exception of a very few herds all are decidedly mixed and pedigree stock is the exception rather than the rule. The average production per cow is approximately 180 pounds of butter fat per year. In milk production per cow the county is 11.5% below the best state average for individual districts and is not in first place in its own district. There is but one Dairy Herd Improvement Association unit in the county and to complete its unit farmers from neighboring counties are members. Fortunately within recent months an artificial insemination cooperative has been organized which will do much, but additional units should be encouraged to give opportunity to a much larger percentage of the farmers.

III. TOWN CONSOLIDATION (See table-page 31)

Seven townships in the northern part of the county are having difficulty in financing public services. All of these have less than one-fourth of their total land area in farms and the soils are among the poorest in the county. Their location in reference to growing season and temperature is unfavorable to good farming. A shrinking tax base, due to loss of assessed valuation through tax-delinquency and public exchange of land, has placed an additional burden on the towns and county. The relief load is out of proportion compared to the sixteen other townships in the county and schools require more than the present state aid. Cropland per farm is about thirty percent less than the average for the county and much too low for good management. Tenancy is increasing and is 4% above the county average.

IV. AMENDMENT TO THE COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE

Nearly 70,000 acres of land in fifteen different locations embracing land use classes A, B and C which are contiguous to present zoned areas should be zoned promptly according to the recommendation of the county committee. The lands are not suitable for agricultural use.

V. RELOCATION OF SETTLERS

No less than fifty farmers located within non-agricultural lands should be relocated. The relief burden and tax delinquency will both be appreciably lowered.
COMPARATIVE DATA

Northern Area

vs.

Southern Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOWNSHIP AVERAGES</th>
<th>SOUTHERN</th>
<th>NORTHERN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population Ratio</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land in Farms (Remainder unsuitable)</td>
<td>18,836</td>
<td>4,167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of farms</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acres per Farm</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cropland per Farm - Acres</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Grains &amp; Corn per Farm (Per cent)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grass &amp; Hay - Alfalfa, etc; (Per cent)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato Acreage per Township</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy Cows per Farm</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Quality Land (percentage of area)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenancy (per cent)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension (20% Chargeback to Town per Farm)</td>
<td>21¢</td>
<td>$1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare (Public Cost per Taxpayer)</td>
<td>14¢</td>
<td>21¢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSA Cases per Township</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSA Subsistance (Basis—Cost for all Farms)</td>
<td>$44.00</td>
<td>$68.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Delinquency (Charge all Farm Basis)</td>
<td>$47.00</td>
<td>$152.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town &amp; County Combined Gov't. Cost per Farm</td>
<td>$7.00</td>
<td>$23.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural School Cost per Pupil (annual)</td>
<td>$58.00</td>
<td>$77.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co. Representation per unit of population</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Generalized Land Use Classification - 1940

### Oconto County

#### Northern Area
- **In Farms**: 32,320 Acres
- **In Forest**: 217,440 Acres
- **Indian Res.**: 69,120 Acres
- **Total**: 318,880 Acres

#### Southern Area
- **In Farms**: 265,914 Acres
- **Forest & Swamp**: 123,680 Acres
- **Total**: 394,594 Acres

### County Classes
- **Class A land**: 37,240 Acres
- **Class B land**: 337,354 Acres
- **Class C land**: 1,840 Acres
- **Class D land**: 2,120 Acres
- **Class E land**: 334,920 Acres
- **Classes D & E**: 337,040 Acres - 47.2%

### County Land Use
- **In Farms**: 238,234 - 41.8%
- **Forest & Swamp**: 346,120 - 48.5%
- **Indian Reservation**: 69,120 - 9.7%
- **Grand Total**: 713,474 Acres
THE CONSOLIDATION OF CERTAIN TOWNS OF OCONTO COUNTY

by

Geo. S. Wehrwein
University of Wisconsin

***

The Tax Base of the Towns in Question

For purposes of comparison the town of Little River was selected because it is a well developed farming town with 184 farms in 1930 and also because it covers a larger area than a town of 36 square miles and therefore represents town government spread over more square miles than the usual town.

In Table I, the five towns in the Nicolet National Forest are grouped together, Breed and Bagley likewise, and Stiles and Little River are shown separately. The first important fact shown by this table is the large acreage of tax exempt land in the five northern towns and in Bagley. In so far as continued purchase by the federal government and the prompt taking of title to all tax delinquent land will no doubt further increase the area of tax exempt land, the tax base (at least in area) will tend to shrink rather than increase in the future. The area of tax exempt land is much less in Breed than in other towns and least of all in Little River.

Table II. shows the tax base of these towns in terms of the assessed valuation by the five classes of real estate, personal property, and total property. One of the large sectors of the tax base in the five

* The township of Stiles was also suggested as a town "which might also consider consolidation."
### Table 1.

Area of Towns, of Tax Exempt and of Taxable Area, and Acreage of Land in Farms and in Crops, 1940

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Area of Town 1/</th>
<th>Tax Exempt 2/</th>
<th>Area Taxable</th>
<th>Per Cent of Area Paying Taxes</th>
<th>Acreage in Farms 3/</th>
<th>Per Cent of Town in Farms</th>
<th>Acreage in Crops 3/</th>
<th>Per Cent of Town in crops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armstrong</td>
<td>46,627</td>
<td>32,621</td>
<td>14,006</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>3,910</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>1,128</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doty</td>
<td>33,376</td>
<td>19,783</td>
<td>13,593</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>2,260</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverview</td>
<td>46,633</td>
<td>30,184</td>
<td>16,449</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>3,680</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>922</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsend</td>
<td>27,058</td>
<td>10,033</td>
<td>17,025</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>3,448</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>1,078</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheeler</td>
<td>46,313</td>
<td>27,013</td>
<td>19,300</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>3,284</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>1,158</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>200,007</strong></td>
<td><strong>119,634</strong></td>
<td><strong>80,373</strong></td>
<td><strong>40.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>16,582</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,676</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagley</td>
<td>22,704</td>
<td>13,118</td>
<td>9,586</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>4,103</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>897</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broed</td>
<td>22,772</td>
<td>7,022</td>
<td>15,750</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>7,981</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>2,742</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>45,476</strong></td>
<td><strong>20,140</strong></td>
<td><strong>25,336</strong></td>
<td><strong>55.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,084</strong></td>
<td><strong>26.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,639</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stiles</td>
<td>22,122</td>
<td>2,799</td>
<td>19,323</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>10,800</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>No report</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little River</td>
<td>33,240</td>
<td>2,001</td>
<td>31,139</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>26,039</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>10,417</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1/ Wisconsin Blue Book 1935, p. 677-678
2/ Report of the Supervisor of Assessments for Oconto County 1940
3/ As reported by the Assessors to State Crop Reporting Service, 1940.
### Table II

Assessed Value of Various Classes of Property in Certain Towns of Oconto County*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A Residential</th>
<th>B Mercantile</th>
<th>C Manufacturing</th>
<th>D Agricultural</th>
<th>E Swamp, Waste and Cut-Over</th>
<th>F Timber</th>
<th>Total Real Estate</th>
<th>Personal Property</th>
<th>total Property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armstrong</td>
<td>$25,645</td>
<td>$12,655</td>
<td>$1,475</td>
<td>$42,025</td>
<td>$39,185</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$120,985</td>
<td>$20,021</td>
<td>$141,006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doty</td>
<td>26,295</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>9,210</td>
<td>48,994</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>84,499</td>
<td>4,180</td>
<td>88,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverview</td>
<td>53,155</td>
<td>2,855</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>28,837</td>
<td>43,523</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>128,370</td>
<td>10,505</td>
<td>138,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsend</td>
<td>26,050</td>
<td>5,335</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>39,595</td>
<td>46,633</td>
<td>3,870</td>
<td>122,053</td>
<td>17,929</td>
<td>139,982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheeler</td>
<td>46,015</td>
<td>22,175</td>
<td>2,180</td>
<td>61,906</td>
<td>59,823</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>193,499</td>
<td>20,548</td>
<td>214,047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>177,160</strong></td>
<td><strong>43,020</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,225</strong></td>
<td><strong>181,573</strong></td>
<td><strong>238,158</strong></td>
<td>5,270</td>
<td><strong>649,406</strong></td>
<td><strong>73,183</strong></td>
<td><strong>722,589</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagley</td>
<td>6,400</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>22,690</td>
<td>27,630</td>
<td>1,020</td>
<td>57,740</td>
<td>9,275</td>
<td>67,015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breed</td>
<td>8,855</td>
<td>2,390</td>
<td>3,700</td>
<td>111,880</td>
<td>37,020</td>
<td>2,140</td>
<td>165,985</td>
<td>26,367</td>
<td>192,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15,255</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,390</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,700</strong></td>
<td><strong>134,570</strong></td>
<td><strong>64,650</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,160</strong></td>
<td><strong>223,725</strong></td>
<td><strong>35,642</strong></td>
<td><strong>259,367</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>86.2</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stiles</td>
<td>9,545</td>
<td>18,451</td>
<td>23,030</td>
<td>327,755</td>
<td>39,885</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>418,666</td>
<td>45,204</td>
<td>463,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.1</td>
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<td>5.0</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<td>8,350</td>
<td>7,120</td>
<td>817,015</td>
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<td>873,225</td>
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<td>87.7</td>
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* Report of the Supervisor of Assessments of Oconto County, 1940
northern towns is the residential property, largely recreational and resort property, which, according to the Supervisor of Assessments report of 1940, was assessed at $177,160 in these towns as compared with only $5,575 in Little River. This form of property was also more important in Breed, Bagley and Stiles, than in Little River. Mercantile property totalled over $43,000 in the five towns in the Nicolet Forest but only $8,350 in Little River. It is of small importance in Breed and Bagley but fairly valuable in Stiles. Manufacturing property is of considerable value only in Stiles.

Considering the original source of taxable wealth, namely, timber, it will be noted that this is an insignificant item in all the towns. Furthermore, the agricultural town of Little River has more than twice the amount of timber in terms of assessed valuation than the five towns in the Nicolet Forest, and Breed and Bagley together have more than half as much as the five "forest" towns put together.

It is an important fact that $238,153 of the tax base of the five towns in the Nicolet Forest consists of swamp, waste and cut-over land, the land incapable of yielding an income in its present condition and much of it in unstable ownership, and together with the timber (as soon as this is cut) likely to revert to public ownership. Fully 33% of the value of all taxable property of the Nicolet Forest towns is in the "E" classification, i.e. swamp, waste and cut-over. It should be noted, however, that the Supervisor of Assessments reports that this form of property is considerably overassessed, whereas the other forms of land are usually underassessed.
Agricultural land is the basic resource of unincorporated areas in all but a few highly developed recreational areas of Wisconsin. In Little River $317,015 of taxable wealth is represented by the "D" class, i.e. agricultural land or 82% of the entire tax base. This is somewhat less than the value of all land in farms since within the line fence there may also be timber, and swamp, waste, and cut-over land. In the five towns in the Nicolet Forest agricultural land totalled only $181,573 or 1/4 of all taxable wealth, in Breed and Bagley together, $134,570, or about 52% of total property values, while Stiles has $327,755 of assessed value or 71% of total property in the farm land classification.

The trend in agriculture, in the forest towns, judged by the number of farms, has been steadily downward since 1935, at which time the number in the Nicolet Forest towns was higher than in 1930. (Table III.) This seems to be true also of Bagley, whereas Breed and Stiles have about held their own. Little River has more farms today than in 1930 or 1935 according to the reports of the town assessor.

In general, the census figure for the number of farms is higher than the figure reported by the assessors. There is a confusing variation from year to year depending upon the way in which the term farm is defined, as well as changes due to the actual number of farms. It is not easy to tell whether a tract of land with a house on it and little or no cultivation is a bona fide farm or not. The trend rather than the number for a given year is important.

Turning from the number of farms to the acreage of farm land, we note from the last two columns of Table I. that only 16,582 acres of
the 200,000 acres in the Nicolet Forest towns or 3.3% is in farms, and of this only about one-fourth is in crop land. In contrast, in Little River, 78.8% of the town is in farms and of this area about 40% is in crop land.

If the recommendation to relocate 50 isolated settlers, and "the more rapid and equitable purchase of isolated farms and forest land in the federal forest" are carried out the number of farms will continue to decrease and the agricultural tax base will decline even more in the "forested" towns.

So much for the present and prospective tax base. Agriculture, timber and cut-over land will continue to decline in area and in value in the Nicolet Forest towns and less perhaps in Bagley, but recreational lands and properties may increase. Can these towns continue separate town governments economically and efficiently? What can be saved if they consolidate? For the purpose of discussion let us assume that the five towns in the Nicolet Forest consolidate and that Bagley is joined to Breed.

What is the Economical Size of a Town?

In the bulletin *The Cut-Over Region of Wisconsin* certain minimum requirements for towns are stated. 1/ The minimum area of 36 square miles is easily met in the north. A minimum of 200 electors is set in order that there may be a reasonable equality of representation

on the county board of supervisors. In 1940 the town of Little River
with 1,011 people had no more representatives on the board than Doty
with 125 people. However, the minimum is set in terms of electors and
total population is not easy to translate into legally eligible voters.
Table IV shows the number of votes cast for president or governor in
the elections of 1932 to 1938, inclusive. If these figures are taken
as the basis, only Little River, Stiles and Armstrong are well above
the minimum of 200 electors, Townsend, Wheeler and Breed are near the
standard, while Bagley, Doty and Riverview are below the 200 voter
minimum.

The third requirement of $400,000 assessed valuation is based
upon the fact that school districts with less than $200,000 of taxable
property qualify for equalization aid and twice this amount is not un-
reasonable for a town. Using this as a basis all the towns with the
exception of Stiles and Little River fall below the minimum, especially
Bagley which has only $67,015 of assessed valuation. Doty had only
$38,679. Bagley and Breed together fall below this minimum and the
combined five Nicolet Forest towns had $270,000 less assessed valuation
than Little River. (Table III.)

The Costs of Town Government

Table V shows the principal outlays which towns make for govern-
mental services, i.e. general government, highways, charities and correct-
ions, debt payments and "other" which includes education. In considering
the possible effect of consolidation on the cost of government, it must
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Armstrong</th>
<th>Doty</th>
<th>Riverview</th>
<th>Townsend</th>
<th>Wheeler</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Bagley</th>
<th>Breed</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>118</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>115</td>
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<td>72</td>
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<td>53</td>
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<td>73</td>
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<td>50</td>
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<td>137</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>129</td>
<td>112</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>178</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>184</td>
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<td>Armstrong</td>
<td>Doty</td>
<td>Riverview</td>
<td>Townsend</td>
<td>Wheeler</td>
<td>Bagley Breed</td>
<td>Stiles</td>
<td>Little River</td>
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<tr>
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<td>68</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>61</td>
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<td>165</td>
<td>190</td>
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<td>265</td>
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<td>111</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>210</td>
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<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>162</td>
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<td>66</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>452</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Population</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>1076</td>
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<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Population</td>
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<td>125</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>806</td>
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be recognized that some of the items are present irrespective of the size of the town. Highways will cost just so many dollars per mile to build and maintain whether in large or in small towns, except for the economies of administration. Table V. shows that from 1/3 to 2/3 of the total disbursements of the towns listed in the table were spent for highways (1927-1936) With $65 a mile state aid for town roads, the local people are relieved of most, if not all, of their road costs. "Charities and corrections" likewise are independent of the size of the towns and represent only a small proportion of total disbursements. The main item which will be affected by consolidation is general government which took less than 11% of the town's outlays in Stiles and Little River but 23.4% in the combined Nicolet Forest towns and 18.5% in Breed and Bagley taken together.

One of the difficulties in dealing with costs of government is revealed by this table and Table VI. For instance, the average cost of "running" Bagley from 1927 to 1936, inclusive, was only $2332 per year, whereas Doty with fewer farms and smaller population spent $3254, presumably for the same services. In Table VI. "general government" is broken down into the constituent items for 1932-1936, a shorter period it should be noted than the one used in Table V. The economical expenditures of Bagley and Breed are even more evident in this table.

In considering the cost of government services economy or "low cost" is only one part of the picture. The taxpayer should also consider the quantity and quality of the services he gets for his dollar. This cannot be shown by a set of statistics. For instance, the town of
### TABLE V.

**Average Annual Disbursements by Purpose for Selected Towns of Oconto County**  
**Fiscal Years 1927-1936***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>General Government</th>
<th>Highways</th>
<th>Charities and corrections</th>
<th>Debt payments</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Percentage Distribution</th>
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<td>Town</td>
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<tr>
<td>Armstrong</td>
<td>3,324</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>1,138</td>
<td>762</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doty</td>
<td>3,254</td>
<td>877</td>
<td>1,582</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>656</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1,992</td>
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<td>1,157</td>
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<td><strong>5,601</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,554</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,288</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,036</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,498</strong></td>
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<th>Highways</th>
<th>Charities and corrections</th>
<th>Debt payments</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Percentage Distribution</th>
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<td>Town</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2,307</td>
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<td>649</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>3,672</strong></td>
<td><strong>549</strong></td>
<td><strong>656</strong></td>
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<th>Town</th>
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<th>Highways</th>
<th>Charities and corrections</th>
<th>Debt payments</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Percentage Distribution</th>
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<td>Town</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stiles</td>
<td>9,545</td>
<td>1,002</td>
<td>3,152</td>
<td>1,287</td>
<td>1,280</td>
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<td>7,344</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>1,763</td>
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* From data obtained by the Public Land Inventory and Finance Study, Wisconsin State Planning Board.
Doty spent $131 on the average for the assessment of its properties which in 1940 totalled $88,679; in Bagley $62 was spent to assess $67,015 of taxable property, and in Little River $150 to assess $996,055 of real and personal property. The assessor had to see 13 farmers in Doty, 42 in Bagley and 198 in Little River. Unfortunately the data at hand do not show how many resorts, stores, residences, factories and other non-farm properties the assessor had to visit, so complete and fair comparisons cannot be made. Nevertheless, one wonders how adequate a job an assessor can perform for $62. It may be that the town that spends $130 a year is getting more for its tax dollar than the one that spends $60 for assessment. The same must be said for most of the other functions and officers. Some towns have spent as little as $2 a year on their town halls, others as high as $164; whether these sums are wisely spent and carefully administered cannot be told until the purposes are examined and the work appraised.

The cost of town government can be compared best if the cost is shown in terms of $1,000 of assessed valuation. Since the cost of government for the towns was presented for the years 1932-1936, in Table VI., the assessed valuations as found in the Supervisor of Assessments reports were averaged for the same years, but 1937 was added to broaden the average by one year in Table VII. Compared with the same value figure, in Table II. for 1940, it will be noted that the valuations for 1932-36 were higher than in 1940 for the forest towns, including Bagley. Taxable values were down in Breed and Little River. In other words, the ability of the forest towns to pay for
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<th>Town Treasurer</th>
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<th>Elections</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armstrong</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doty</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverview</td>
<td>958</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsend</td>
<td>1,169</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheeler</td>
<td>1,119</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Towns</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1/ From data obtained by the Public Land Inventory and Finance Study, Wisconsin State Planning Board.
2/ Consists of Lev., Payments to State Deposit Fund, and "Other".
TABLE VII.
Cost of General Government of Selected Towns of Oconto County
Per $1,000 of Assessed Valuation, 1932-1937*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Average Assessed Valuation 1932-1937</th>
<th>Average Cost of General Government</th>
<th>Cost per $1,000 of Assessed Valuation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armstrong</td>
<td>185,262</td>
<td>983</td>
<td>5.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doty</td>
<td>114,082</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>8.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverview</td>
<td>162,463</td>
<td>1,186</td>
<td>7.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsend</td>
<td>259,830</td>
<td>1,347</td>
<td>5.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheeler</td>
<td>246,007</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>6.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>967,644</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,056</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.26</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagley</td>
<td>77,840</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>7.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breed</td>
<td>190,630</td>
<td>958</td>
<td>5.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>268,470</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,504</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.60</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stiles</td>
<td>481,050</td>
<td>1,119</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little River</td>
<td>943,399</td>
<td>1,169</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Average assessed valuation as reported in the Supervisor of Assessments reports or in the files of the Tax Commission; average cost of general government from data obtained by the Public Land Inventory and Finance Study, Wisconsin State Planning Board.
government was greater some years ago than it is today and less in the
two agricultural towns.

The second column of Table VII. shows only the costs of general
government—the chief item to be affected by consolidation—the third column
shows the cost per $1,000 of assessed valuation. From this table it would
seem that the property owners of Little River paid only $1.24 for general
government upon 1,000 of property, in Stiles $2.33 but in the towns in the
Nicolet Forest the minimum was $5.30 and in Doty $8.24. Even in economical
Bagley the tax payer with $1,000 of assessed valuation paid an average of
$7.01 per year for this item of government. The advantage of living in a
town with at least $200,000 of assessed valuation is evident.

Can these costs be reduced by consolidation? While the figures
for any one town or any one year may be erratic, we may assume that using
the average tends to "average out" unusual figures as between towns and
years. If Breed and Bagley were consolidated their combined assessment
would be only $268,470, which is only a little more than Wheeler or Tow-
send and much less than Little River. It would seem reasonable that the
cost of operating the general government of the combined areas should not
be more than that of Little River. Certainly one town board, one clerk,
one treasurer, and one town hall should cost less than two and the cost of
elections and board of review should be materially reduced. Since the
work of assessment is not decreased by consolidation not much saving can
be made here if the same efficiency is maintained after consolidation as
before.
It cannot be expected therefore that costs will be cut in half. But using the cost of general government of Little River as a guide—$1,169—with $268,470 of taxable value "back of" this cost the cost per 1,000 of assessed valuation would be $4.35, a worthwhile reduction from $5.02 and $7.01, the present costs in these two towns.

The same possible reductions can be expected if all the towns of the Nicolet Forest area were consolidated. Because of the size of the area, however, the town board might need more than the sums expended by the present town board of Little River. However, many of the other items such as treasurer, clerk, board of review, elections and town hall could be reduced to 1/4 or 1/5 of the present total expense. One-third of assessed valuation consists of swamp, waste and cut-over and this should reduce the work of the assessor, as well as the fact that only 40% of the area is taxable at all. Assuming that it will cost twice as much to operate this large town as it does the town of Little River the cost per $1,000 would be reduced from the present $6.26 to $2.41

Reducing the number of towns will not only save costs of town government but also the cost of county government. The seven members of the county board representing the present towns would be reduced to two with more than proportionate savings in per diem and mileage for county board attendance since these towns are those farthest from the county seat.

The final consideration is the question of convenience of the people in attending town meetings, going to elections, paying taxes, etc. Of course the distances are greater in large towns then in the usual 36
square mile towns. However, Breed and Bagley combined are not larger than Brazau, Armstrong, Riverview or Wheeler are now, and not much larger than Little River or Little Susamico. However, the road system of the towns in the Nicolet Forest is such that practically all residents can reach a county or state trunk highway after a short trip over town roads after which it is easy to reach any central place where the new town hall might be located.

The above does not exhaust the possibilities of combinations. The lay-out of the roads in Bagley suggests that combining with Maple Valley would be more convenient for the residents of Bagley than consolidation with Breed. Likewise, wiping out all town lines in the Nicolet National Forest and drawing a line so as to create two new towns based upon the present road system, distribution of taxable property and of farms might result in a satisfactory arrangement, though savings no doubt will be greater if only one town were created.

However, the present road system should not be permitted to determine the town set-up. Town government will be modified by the excellent suggestions made in the Land Use Planning report on roads, education, public acquisition and management of public lands, etc. Perhaps the most forward looking recommendation is made on page 21 "Under governmental reorganization, the area of the towns and the type of government might be changed according to major land uses and only Vital public services provided." This recommendation recognizes that the form of government should fit the needs of the people as influenced
by their economy, occupations, and their natural resources. Unfortunately the Wisconsin constitution insists on uniformity in town, county and school district government irrespective of density of population, the basic industries or the taxable property of the area. In spite of the "uniformity clause" exception has already been made in the case of Milwaukee County, where the present form of local government was deemed to be "impracticable".